

The Gospel Witness

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T. T. SHIELDS, *Editor*.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1: 16.

Address correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, July 10th, 1927.
 (Stenographically Reported.)

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
 —Romans 15:4.



LET us unite in prayer: We bow in Thy presence, O Lord our God, to make mention of the righteousness of our Lord Jesus, and of His only. We have no righteousness of our own, we have all "sinned, and come short of the glory of God"; but we thank Thee that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to such as believe. Our hope is in Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our Righteousness, of Whom we have been singing. Lift up our hearts, we pray Thee, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit this morning, that we may be able to appropriate all the treasures of grace which are in Him Who is our Mediator, Who is our great High Priest, appearing in the presence of God for us. Our hope is in Him through the shed blood, and we thank Thee that it is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Forbid that anyone in Thy presence this morning should have any other confidence than this. Help us each to say as we come to Thee,—

"I have no other argument,
 I want no other plea;
 It is enough that Jesus died,
 And that He died for me."

We come to Thee this morning as a company of travellers who have turned aside from the pilgrim way for a moment to rest with Thee; even as the disciples were wont to gather at Thy feet in the days of Thy flesh, and ask Thee to expound to them the principles of Thy teaching, so we come this morning for further instruction, that we may more perfectly fulfil the will

of our God. There are some before Thee this morning who doubtless are very tired, they may not be weary of body, but of mind, weary of trying to find a way through all their difficulties. We thank Thee for Thy tender compassion, and for Thy gracious invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." O help us to enter more fully into an understanding of this great fact, that the living of life Christ's way, by the grace and power of His Spirit, is ever the easiest way; and that such burdens as He imposes upon us are always light, because of the grace He give us to carry them. Give rest therefore to the weary of spirit this morning. We thank Thee we have One to Whom the Lord has given the tongue of the learned, that He knows "how to speak a word in season to him that is weary". May every weary heart hear such a word this morning, and rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. It may be that some this morning are soldiers in the battle, who have been overcome by the superior forces of the enemy, they have been beaten and bruised and have fallen by the wayside, and are unable longer to continue the journey. O Lord, we pray that Thou wilt be to them as the good Samaritan, for verily Thou dost bind up our wounds, Thou dost pour in oil and wine, Thou dost take us to be Thine own guests, and dost provide for all sustenance. We pray that any defeated soul may find new hope in Christ, and by the infilling of the Spirit, may be made stronger than the strong man armed. If any this morning are lonely, far from home, may the companionship of the Holy Spirit be very sweet and precious to them. Help us to feel that we are not alone, for Thou hast said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." We are all in need of light upon the duties of life. We are so foolish and ignorant: "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Always, left to ourselves, we are turned aside; and, like Hezekiah when the ambassadors from Babylon came to him, we boast in ourselves instead of boasting in the Lord. We pray that the illumination of the Holy Spirit may be given to everyone this morning. We beseech Thee to have special respect to any who are not members of the household of faith; who have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but whose eyes of faith have never been opened to see Thee. If there are any such bankrupt souls, bitter of spirit perhaps, because of life's multiplied disappointments, may they this morning get a clear view of Christ, and see Him as Saviour and Lord. So we beseech Thee to let Thy benediction rest upon all Thy people, and upon all who minister Thy Word, publicly and privately. Grant, we beseech Thee, that to-day, by the ministry of Thy gracious Spirit, multitudes may be saved; that Thy people may be built up in their most holy faith; and that throughout the world the cause of truth may triumph. Bless us now as we open Thy Word; may we be conscious of Thy presence, may the voice of Thy Spirit be heard in every heart. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

I shall speak to you for a little while this morning about the use of the Bible. It is represented in the verse I have read to you as a Book that has been divinely produced, with a view to effecting certain divine purposes. It is not the product of evolution, of the evolution of man's religious consciousness, nor is it the result of man's blind search after God; but it is written for a special purpose, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."

I.

THUS HUMAN NEED IN THE SCRIPTURES OF TRUTH HAS BEEN FULLY ANTICIPATED AND PROVIDED FOR.

It is a remarkable fact that the Bible does not wear out. You have bought many books—and you have read more than you have bought. Very few of them have you read the second time—some, perhaps, you have not been able to complete because of their want of interest; but the Bible is as a well that is never dry, a light that is never extinguished, a banqueting-table that is never exhausted of its dainties; it is always ministering, and never wearing out.

And the reason is, that it has been *especially prepared for our use*; the things that are written here were “written aforetime for our learning”. How reasonable it is that this should be so! How inspiring it is to read the record of divine grace! How beautifully, how fully, how elaborately, our gracious God furnished this earth for human habitation, so that when man was at last created and put in the garden, every possible provision had already been made for his need. And even now, if I may dare to say so, we have not finished unpacking the trunk. It was long before man learned that God had stored away a supply of coal in the cellars of the world; and little by little, all through the centuries, men have been discovering how fully God has provided for human need.

After all, that is the function of true science—not “science falsely so-called”—to go through this great house we call the world, and discover its treasures which God has laid up for those who love Him. Once we thought we were very clever when we wired our houses, and were able to talk to our neighbours without going out-of-doors. We considered it an extraordinarily clever thing to send the voice along a copper wire—but now we have learned that all that was provided for long before we knew anything about it, and we are almost ashamed of our wires now; for we have discovered that God has provided a medium through which we may talk thousands of miles without any wires at all. And by and by, when we have learned to articulate more clearly, we may be our own broadcasting machine; and may be able to talk from continent to continent, and who knows but from planet to planet? Thus richly has this world been furnished, so that nothing we need is lacking.

I went last week through our Des Moines University buildings with care—it took me four hours to walk through them—and I was interested in one great room in the School of Pharmacy where drugs of all kinds were spread out in little boxes and labelled, “For the Students’ Examination and Analysis”. I did not understand them, of course, but as I looked upon them I learned something of what the Psalmist meant when he said, “He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man.” And I could not help thinking of how wonderfully God has wrought for us in the world about us.

Would it not be strange if He had made every provision for our need in the material world, and yet had made no provision for our spiritual requirements? The mariner has something by which to guide his course, he has the pole star, and there is also that mysterious something, which no one understands and which we call the magnetic pole, by which the compass is directed, making it possible for men to make their way across the trackless deep. In fact in every realm of life God has set up standards by which man may be guided and his life directed—I say, how strange it would have been

had He not provided for the requirements of the soul! But just as our gracious God has furnished the world, and provided for all our material need, so in the Scripture He has stored away everything we require for our learning, in order that we may be the men and women we should be. It was written "aforetime" by divine order; and by divine prescience every possible requirement of the soul has been anticipated and provided for in this wonderful Book.

The Scriptures, then, were written for "our learning". The Book is to be our Teacher, the Book is to judge us—we are not to judge the Book. There is a world of difference between these two attitudes of approach. Nowadays it has become common for men to attempt to teach the Book. They turn to Genesis and go through every page of it and say, "I do not believe that—and I do not believe that—and I do not believe that." Poor blind souls they are, how little do they know that the Bible was written for our learning! It was intended to be our Teacher, and no man will ever get the wealth of wisdom and of grace here laid up for the believing soul who approaches it in that critical attitude. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." And it is equally true of the Word of God, that if you would get out of it that which God has put into it for you, you must come to it as to the Word of God: you must surrender your will to it, you must yield your intellect to it, you must let it search your heart, you must sit at its feet as at the feet of a teacher.

That is perfectly reasonable, is it not? It is useless for me to go to a doctor and tell him how to heal me. If I am a doctor he would say, "Physician, heal thyself". If you will be your own adviser, do it yourself—do it yourself. If you are a master in any particular realm of knowledge, you do not go to anyone else for instruction; you go rather to a man who has specialized in some particular branch about which you yourself know little or nothing; and though you were a college professor, or the author of an Encyclopaedia in the particular branch of knowledge of which you are ignorant, you must go to a master and bow at his feet and say, "What shall I do?" The Bible is the Master, it is the word of Divine Wisdom, it tells of Him in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge reside—it is, indeed, the record of Him in Whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." And all that is written herein, is written for our instruction, that you may come to the Book as a humble pupil that you may learn therefrom that which He would have you know. It was written "aforetime for our learning"; but we shall learn from it only as we come to it in this teachable attitude.

If there are any here this morning who have never learned anything from the Scriptures, it is because you have never gone to school to the Scriptures. The Book is designed to teach us.

It teaches us, first of all, *about ourselves*. You will never learn what you are until you come to the Book. Here your portrait is properly drawn: the Bible will pay you no compliment, it will humble you in the dust. I remember somewhere reading of a young man who went to college. He was taken into the President's office, and the President said to him, "What do you know?" The young man replied, "I do not know anything, sir, I came here to learn." "Well", said the President, "that is very good in general terms; I suppose you mean that, but what schools have you attended? What credits have you?" "Nothing of which I am proud, sir", he said, "I have done such poor

work that it is not worth mentioning. I have come here to learn." "But what have you read?" he was asked. "Oh, nothing worth speaking about." "Well, but have you read nothing at all?" "Of course, I have read a little; but nothing to what I ought to have read, or should like to have read", was his reply. "And you know nothing?" "No, sir, nothing worth speaking of. I supposed the college existed to teach, so I have come to learn." The President took him by the hand and said, "Let me congratulate you, sir. You are three years in advance of the average student. It takes the average student three years to learn that he knows nothing."

A great many people come to the Bible with the idea that they know everything; but if you let it talk to you, you will discover what a great sinner you are—no one else will ever tell you you are a sinner. They may tell you you are not perfect, that there is something wrong; but the Bible will go right to the heart of the matter and leave you stripped, standing before God as a poor, helpless, bankrupt sinner. It was "written for our learning".

That is the one thing you and I need to learn, first of all, how sinful, how utterly helpless we are. It is only because people do not know the nature of the disease called sin that they try to heal themselves. They think it is just a little human imperfection, something that can be sloughed off. But the Bible tells you there is something wrong with the heart: "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"; "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"; that the will is corrupt, "We have turned every one to his own way"; that the intellect is against God, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the will of God, neither indeed can be"; that the memory is evil, and retains that which is evil and not good—that the "whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." That is what the Bible tells us, and that is what we need to learn.

Further, the Bible will *teach us about others*. It is more important that we should know about ourselves. There are some people who know a great deal about other people. I knew a man who said that he was always rather suspicious of people who were supremely concerned about other people's sins. There are people who are expert in judging other people's sins; but the Bible will tell you what you are, and then it will tell you that you are just one of a class, and that all have sinned. It will cure you of a hundred evils to which men give themselves who do not believe the Bible is true.

Then *we shall learn from the Bible of God Himself, Who He is*. The Scriptures "were written for our learning". We shall learn that He hears the cry of the human soul; that He gave His Son to die for our sins; that He comes to the help of the helpless; that He has compassion on the poor; that He gives energy to the one who is being defeated. We shall know something of His holiness, something of His mercy, His grace, His power—it was written "for our learning".

A little while ago in the Northern Baptist Convention a certain gentleman from Chicago went up and down the country saying, in effect, "It is no longer possible for us to unite on the Bible; but we may unite on the person of Christ"! But what does anybody know of "the Person of Christ" apart from the Bible? This, my friends, is the record, from Genesis to Revelation, that God has given us His Son; and "whatsoever things were written aforetime

were written for our learning", that we might learn of God. And you cannot learn about God anywhere else: the only God we know is the God Who is revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ, and the only record we have of Christ is in this inspired Book; so that we are shut up for our knowledge of ourselves, and of our fellows—yes, and I think, had I time to develop it, I could show you that you are shut up to a knowledge of the world about you, as well as to a knowledge of God, to the Scriptures of truth. I do not believe that any man is a scientist, I do not believe any man gets at the truth in any realm, unless he approaches the study of that subject through the light of the Scriptures. The message of God in nature is really known only to those whose minds are illuminated by the Holy Spirit, just as truly as the message of God in the Book can only be known by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—indeed, we know nothing, we know the truth not at all, we have no knowledge of truth in the absolute in respect to any realm, apart from the written Word. We are dependent upon God to tell us the truth for time and for eternity, written in this book for our learning.

Now the next word: "That we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." The Bible is given to us that *thereby, or therefrom, we may learn patience and receive comfort*. Is there anyone here who does not need to learn patience? The fact that the days of our years are three score and ten, and that we are subject to the limitations of time and space, inevitably makes us impatient. It is not possible for a man to be patient who sees only temporal things. Think that through a moment, will you? *Patience, in the true sense, is possible only to one who gets the perspective of eternity*. You can never be patient until you learn to look at things through God's eyes. The little boy to whom his father says, "Not to-day, my son, perhaps to-morrow", says "Will to-morrow ever come?" "Not this Christmas, my lad, perhaps next Christmas." "Next Christmas! Why, that is an eternity!" I remember when I was a little boy I used to feel that the day after Christmas was the nearest thing to nothing that anything could possibly be, because the next Christmas was so far away! For a child to be told to wait is to inflict him with a hard discipline, because he looks at things from a child's point of view.

We can get a glimpse of this truth through the things that come to us through the years. There are men and women here this morning saying, "When I was young I wanted things done now—Now—NOW; but as the years multiplied, I learned how to wait." But it is the hardest thing in the world to wait—wait—wait, and be patient.

Why were the Scriptures written? Why were they given to us? That we might learn to be patient, that we might come to look at things from the standpoint of One Who, in respect of time, is a Multimillionaire. God always has plenty of time: He never is before His time—He never is too late. Let me tell you what I think is wrapped up in this simple text. Take the case of Abraham. He was a man subject to like passions as we are, subject to all our limitations. He is told to leave his country, and go out to a land that he has never seen. He obeys, and when he is brought to that land, God tells him that He will give him the land, but that He will give it to him in his seed, saying, "I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of

the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." God makes him a great promise, and already the promise involves a miracle, for Abraham has reached the evening-time of his life and has no son; and then after He has made the promise, for perhaps over twenty years, he is kept waiting—waiting. Do you not suppose Abraham became impatient? But he had to learn how God fulfils His own plans and purposes—and in due time Isaac was born. And God told Abraham a strange thing in that period of darkness—you remember the thick darkness that came upon him?—the Lord told Abraham that his seed should go down into Egypt, that they would be there four hundred years, and after that He would judge that nation, and bring them out into liberty. Only when we get the divine standpoint can we count in terms of centuries and millenniums. Men say, "I have only a few years to live. It must be now or never,—let me have any good things I am to have now." The Lord said to Abraham, "Be patient, be patient, and I will fulfil my plan to you by and by; by and by my word will be fulfilled."

We come into Exodus, and there we see Moses eager to get at his work—just like some young men who cannot wait for preparation. He wants to get into it at once, "for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them". But the Lord said to Moses, "You need a college course that will occupy you forty years. Go back to the wilderness to school"—and He sends Moses back forty years to get that impulsiveness corrected, and to learn to have patience to await God's time.

So I could take you all through the Book; but I must be content with but one other case. It is written of David, "And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies; that the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains—I will build God a house, and I will do it at once." And Nathan replied, "Go, do all that is in thine heart"—but when the preacher got home, the Lord talked with him and said, "Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more as beforetime—go and tell David that I do not want him to build Me a house; tell him that I am going to build him a house." And then the Lord drew the curtains, and David looked down through the centuries, and said, "Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?"—and instead of praying for this house of cedar that he had wanted to build, he began to pray that the purposes of God might be fulfilled in that "great while to come"; and he, with Abraham, learned something of God in those experiences. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad." It was as though God said, "Patience, Abraham, patience. It is not Isaac of whom I speak—certainly it is not Ishmael; but look down through the years, let the centuries unroll, and can you not see it?" At last Abraham got a glimpse of Christ, and he knew that when God said; "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed", He was really selecting Abraham as the progenitor, after the flesh, of the Messiah. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Can you be patient a little while? "And comfort"—for you cannot have *patience without comfort*. The word "comfort" is an old word. It did not mean, used here, what we mean by that word to-day. We think of a comforter as one who comes to allay one's grief, exercising a tender compassionate ministry; but the word here really comes from the same root as the word, Comforter, the Paraclete, one who comes to stand by, or alongside—"that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope". We can have comfort only as God is alongside to comfort. Go back through the Book, begin with Eve when the promise of the Conquering Seed is given, and come on down

through the Book, and you will see that to every soul to whom God spake, bidding them to be patient, He gave the promise that He would stand by to gird them with His strength.

You must think this through for yourselves. Had I time I should like to enquire of everyone of you, In what sphere of life do you need patience and comfort—in your family life? You will find it in the Book. In your business? You will find it here. In any other realm of life? You will find it here. In the national sphere? in the international realm? You will always find the example in the Book of how God wrought patience and comfort in the hearts of His people; and it is written there for our learning, that what God has done for others, He can do for us, "that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Some of you have what you call a promise-box. I confess that I do not share your enthusiasm for them, this taking out a promise in a hop-skip-and-jump fashion. God's Word is always true. Someone says, "My verse to-day was so-and-so." Well, what did the verse do for you? "It inspired me, it was a kind of motto: I put it up before me, I turned it over in my mind, and it helped me." And so the Scripture was to you something objective, a sort of idea, or ideal, and had a certain psychological reaction upon yourself. Then you say, "If the Lord said, 'I will never leave thee', well, I say that over to myself, and then I believe it." Is that all? "Through patience and comfort of the scriptures"—how do the Scriptures work patience and comfort in the believing heart? There is something vastly more than a psychological effect, *there is a direct spiritual action on the soul of man if we properly use our Book.* As for example, when Jesus Christ said to the leper, "I will, be thou clean", did He give him a motto, so that the leper said all day, "The Lord said, 'I will, be thou clean', and I will believe it"? No! The Lord Jesus Christ said, "I will, be thou clean", and that word conveyed power, and instantly he was clean. It was the same word that commanded the worlds from nought; it was the same voice that said, "Let there be light", and there was light; it was the same word that said, "Let the earth bring forth", and it did as it was told. When we receive the Scripture, are we merely to hang Scripture text mottos on the wall? or are we to believe them for what they really are, the very Word of God, and to receive instantly all that God wants us to have, and all that He promises to give us?

Think of that great promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee." I read of one years ago being in his study in great distress, in the face of some difficult situation. He cried, "O Lord, let Thy grace be sufficient for me." He lifted his eyes, and the very text he had been pleading was hanging on his wall, and he said, by the touch of God, that one little phrase seemed to blaze like an electric sign, and God said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." And that preacher was able to rise from his knees with an accession of power, for God had given him His word.

What do we need—forgiveness of sin? Then take it, claim it. It is conveyed, it is conferred, to us through His Spirit. Do you need sanctifying power to break the chains that bind? Expect that God will exercise that power to break the chains and set the prisoner free. The "exceeding great and precious promises" are given us that by these we might be able to follow after the divine ideal? that with these great promises before us we might aspire to endeavour to approximate God's purposes for us—is that what it says? No!—"that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Hence patience becomes, not something that is superimposed, but something that is wrought in the soul, as an inherent quality of the soul; not a crutch or a prop, but a new power in the heart. Even as Moses endured "as seeing him who is invisible", man begins all over again. The Scripture says, "Ye must be born again", and he is born again; patience and comfort become a part of him; and in the measure in which he appropriates the promises, in that measure will he grow up into Christ in all things.

That we "might have hope". When hope departs, the man is dead. "We are saved by hope." There are men and women here this morning facing certain things to-morrow, or finding themselves in a particular condition to-day,

and if you believed that condition would continue indefinitely, you could not live; but you are living in hope that the cloud will be lifted, that the winter will pass, and that the springtime will come again into your life. "We are saved by hope." I do not know where to find hope apart from the Bible; I, at least, apart from that Book, am utterly hopeless, for I have tried myself so often. And I know there is no human hand can help me—but "through patience and comfort of the scriptures" I have hope that some day I shall be without sin before the throne of God. I do not know how it can be, that is the miracle of all miracles; but I know that it will be, because it is in the Book. And I have hope of being like Him some day.

There are a great many people roundabout me for whom I have no hope. Please do not ask me to nurse them, I do not know how to do it. There are some people who are very difficult to help. I have no hope for them apart from God; but I know "through patience and comfort of the scriptures" they can be changed.

We live in dark days for the church. I read an article last night as I was coming in the train from Des Moines, in *The Forum*, written by a Chinese on the Chinese situation, in which he said that Christianity had reached an end in China—absolutely the end. It had done good in the past, but, like other religions, it had to give place to other systems. Among other things, he said that this was due to the wave of rationalism that had spread from the Chinese universities. In other words, while there are Christian missionaries that have stood for the faith, there are other religions that have built schools in China, and have sent out men who have taught China to reject the Word of God, and, in the name of the Christian religion, almost the very foundations of the work in China have been destroyed by this accursed Modernism for which Christian people have been foolish enough to pay.

Everywhere you find it. Somebody comes to me and says, "I am going to a certain city, can you tell me where I can go so that I may hear the gospel of salvation?" Someone asked me that of a certain American city the other day, and I had to answer this: "I do not know. I have no doubt the Lord has His witnesses, that there are groups of people, smaller churches perhaps, where faithful witness is borne to the truth; but so far as the outstanding Baptist churches in that city are concerned, you had better stay away from them." Frankly, in that city I do not know of one that is not a disseminator of poison. Any man who says it is not dark, is a blind man; and has never seen the light of God's Word. It is easy to put your head in the sand like the ostrich and say things are progressing. Something called religion is progressing, but the pure unadulterated gospel of God's grace is not very generally preached. What shall we do? "Through patience and comfort of the scriptures" we may have hope. I remember that a nation of slaves was born into freedom in a day; I remember that while they sat down by the rivers of Babylon and wept when they remembered Zion, and hung their harps in the willows, yet in the midst of it all there came a time when the ransomed of the Lord returned, there came a great revival, and Israel was restored. All down through the centuries there have been dark days, but God has shone through. Someone says, "But what if this be the darkest and the last?" Well, the darkness will be dispelled, and "the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings." So we can live in that glorious hope. "We are saved by hope"—hope for ourselves, hope for the church of Christ, hope for everybody, because the whole creation is some day to be "delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God." It is all in the Scriptures. May God help us to use them more.

THE TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY.

The somewhat heavy duties of the Editor have delayed the issue of the Seminary prospectus, but it is now off the press and copies will be mailed by return to all applicants.

With some hesitation we remind our readers of the Seminary's financial needs. We have been so occupied pleading the cause of others that we have had to neglect our own youngest child who is showing some signs of hunger. We shall greatly appreciate such contributions as our friends may be able to send.

Editorial

THE SOUTH WIND.

"And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed . . .". Thus an inspired pen tells the story of how a ship with its crew sailed pleasantly to ruin.

"The south wind" is ever seductive. It whispers promises of ease and comfort. Siren-like, it sings of summer-lands where flowers and fruits abound, where skies are blue, and the air is balmy, and where life may be lived without too much exertion. Who of us has not been tempted by the South Wind? Who has not dreamed of finding the easy path, the tranquil waters, the comfortable way of life? Even the hardy mariner can be cajoled when the South Wind caresses his weather-beaten cheek.

The South Wind promises fair weather in the family life. It represents the easy way. It does not speak of any kind of discipline; it does not suggest self-denial; it knows nothing of ordered obedience. It speaks rather of laxity, of indulgence, and complacent irregularity. When a mother responds to the unreasonable request of an undisciplined child, "Very well, but run away and leave me in peace for a while", she listens to the voice of the South Wind. Or when a father refrains from exerting his authority, and from requiring his children to attend to duty, when he unwisely gives them money, less for their pleasure than for his own ease, he yields to the wooing of the South Wind.

And how the South Wind calls men to the pursuit of pleasure! The parts of this Continent where the South Wind blows are extremely popular. The pursuit of pleasure has become a passion; the love of comfort almost a disease. In business affairs also the South Wind has its influence. It promises easy profits, and large dividends, and ultimate fortune.

Religiously, the South Wind is utterly bewitching. It whispers, "Be not righteous over much; be not too exacting; policy is better than principle; and convenience than conviction. Do not contend; be afraid of the winds that are contrary. The South Wind is your friend and ally."

The South Wind is especially alluring when our ship is anchored in a "haven that is not commodious to winter in." How we dread our winters, the winds and the snows, the frosts and all the circumstances of the winter-time! What cowards we are! It might be supposed that winter seasons were our enemies; that the snow had no treasures; and the north wind no ministry; and the frost, which is given by the breath of God, no function to fulfil. "A haven that was not commodious to winter in." What a picture! We can always justify our departure from such a place, our desire to extricate ourselves from such disadvantageous circumstances.

"And when the South Wind blows softly", it is natural to "suppose that we have obtained our purpose". When difficulties are removed, and doubts dissolved, and clouds dissipated! When the temperature rises, and summer heralds its coming by the South Wind, we say, "Ah, we have lived for this, we have longed for this; and now we have obtained our purpose." The easy path is often called "providential." Apostles and prophets were providentially allowed to go to jail, and to be cast into dungeons, and to be opposed and beaten and tortured. But such an aspect of life is unattractive—we wait for the South Wind; and when it comes, we say, "The Lord is leading us. It must be so that this is the way wherein I should walk." Sometimes we are foolish enough to pray for the north wind as an indication that the Lord would have us turn back, and we say, "If the wind is from the south to-morrow, I shall know that all is well." And "when the south wind blows softly", we loose from thence, and sail away from our Crete!

But how deceptive the South Wind is, very often, after all! In this instance it was followed "not long after" by "a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon". The South Wind is often the precursor of such a tempest. The path of least resistance is often a gradual descent to ruin. The snows and frosts of winter have their God-given ministries. Adversity is often but an

angel in disguise, and a north wind, touched with the biting cold of the frigid lands from which it comes, may really speed our ship toward smooth seas and summer weather.

In this historic instance the South Wind led to shipwreck and to loss of everything but life. It were safer to remain in an incommodious haven through a trying wintertime, than to be beguiled by the South Wind into a journey which issues only in loss. Beware of the temptation of the South Wind!

"Why should I complain
Of want or distress,
Temptation or Pain?
He told me no less:
The heirs of salvation,
I know from His word,
Through much tribulation
Must follow their Lord.

"How bitter that cup,
No heart can conceive,
Which He drank quite up,
That sinners might live:
His way was much rougher
And darker than mine;
Did Jesus thus suffer,
And shall I repine!

"Since all that I meet
Shall work for my good,
The bitter is sweet,
The medicine food;
Though painful at present,
'Twill cease before long;
And then, O how pleasant
The conqueror's song!"

DES MOINES UNIVERSITY NEWS.

Friends of genuinely "Christian" Education, we believe, will be interested in news from Des Moines University under its new management. The new Board of Trustees was faced with two important duties: first, to secure adequate financial support for the Institution; and, secondly, to make sure that every member of the Faculty was so openly committed to the "faith once for all delivered to the saints" as to make it impossible for Modernism to lift its head in Des Moines University.

The Faculty Committee of the Board had a personal interview with every one of the professors, and were delighted to discover that a good number of them were not only absolutely sound in the faith, but had been longing for such a change in the Des Moines management as has now been effected. More than a hundred applications were received from persons desiring positions on the University Staff. Of these a large number had not only the necessary scholastic requirements, but were also found to be in perfect agreement with the Baptist Bible Union's position. Appointments will be made to the Staff at an early date, but meanwhile arrangements are being made for all the prospective members of the Faculty to come to Des Moines for a personal interview with the Committee.

It will be reassuring to our many friends to know that in respect to the Faculty appointments, our chief embarrassment is the embarrassment of riches. We have been delighted to discover how large a number of persons qualified to take important positions in the University, are manifestly true to the Word of God.

Had the Baptist Bible Union undertaken the task of organizing a new university, it is not probable it would have included a College of Pharmacy;

but we found such a college connected with Des Moines, and discovered that it had a large place in the educational life of the State of Iowa. Two excellent gentlemen were in charge of this College, but the head was a Unitarian. After meeting him, we were not surprised to learn that he was very popular with the students. He is a delightful man whom we all coveted for the Lord Jesus Christ; but under the circumstances it became necessary for the Faculty Committee to find a new head for the Institution. This we thought might be very difficult. We have been delighted, however, to discover that a thoroughly-qualified Pharmacist, who had for eight years been chief chemist of one of the largest cities in the United States, and for a like period had been Dean of a College of Pharmacy which is a member of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, is a member of the Baptist Bible Union, and a zealous campaigner for the faith. While the appointment has not yet been made, we have strong hope that that problem has been solved.

The Trustees decided to greatly strengthen the Bible Department of the University, and we hope at an early date to enlarge that department to the status of a College, perhaps naming it the College of Biblical Christianity, which would, to all intents and purposes, be a Theological Seminary.

The Trustees are now able to announce that every department of the University will be fully manned and ready to take care of a thousand students at the opening of the fall semester.

In appointments to the Faculty the Committee have laid down a cast iron rule, that only persons of the requisite scholastic attainments shall be considered. The educational standard of Des Moines will not be lowered, but will be raised with every new appointment.

The financial response to the Baptist Bible Union's appeal has been most gratifying, but it is necessary to state once more our monetary needs. The University's liabilities on current account were \$105,000.00, and the estimated deficit on operating account for next year, approximately \$65,000.00. This means that from the last of May, 1927, to the first of June, 1928, the Baptist Bible Union will have to raise a total of at least \$170,000.00. When it is remembered that the total receipts of the Educational Board of the Northern Baptist Convention last year amounted to only \$240,000.00, it will be recognized that the Baptist Bible Union has undertaken a great task.

We appeal for large gifts, but at an early date a campaign will be inaugurated, by which we hope to secure the help of thousands of small contributors. For example: 1,700 people giving \$100.00 a year would meet our requirements; or 3,400 giving a dollar a week to Des Moines University would relieve us of all anxiety. Envelopes and explanatory pamphlets are being prepared which will enable individual Baptists all over America to send in their pledges to our office, and thereafter their monthly contributions. This will save thousands of dollars of overhead expenses, and will ensure a regular income.

Here are a few suggestions:

1,000 people at \$10.00 a month would give in a year.....	\$120,000.00
1,000 people at \$5.00 a month would give in a year.....	60,000.00
1,000 people saving 50c a week, and giving it monthly, would give in a year	26,000.00
1,000 people saving 25c a week, and giving it monthly, would give in a year	13,000.00
	<hr/>
	\$219,000.00

These four classes would contribute a total of \$219,000.00 for the first year. This would enable us to make all necessary repairs to the buildings; to establish our College of Biblical Christianity, and to set aside a very considerable sum for the reduction of the mortgage.

We appeal to our readers to respond to this suggestion. Send your pledge to Des Moines University. If possible, give a substantial sum to enable us to meet our immediate obligations, and give us a pledge for monthly contributions. We have suggested \$10.00 a month as the highest sum, but some people

of substance could give \$25.00 a month or \$50.00 a month, which would greatly assist us. To all who send pledges to the University, printed envelopes will be sent to facilitate the monthly transmission of contributions to the Treasurer.

Removal of Baptist Bible Union Headquarters.

On account of the inconvenience of keeping two offices, the Executive have decided to remove the Baptist Bible Union Headquarters from Chicago to Des Moines University. This transfer will take place about the first of September, and all Baptist Bible Union members, and other interested friends, are requested to address all Baptist Bible Union mail to the Secretary, Miss Edith M. Rebman, at Des Moines University.

Great Baptist Bible Union Conference at Des Moines.

At the meeting of the Trustee Board of the University held in Des Moines July 12th, 13th, and 14th, it was decided to hold a great Bible Union Conference at the University in connection with the opening of the fall term, September 27th to 29th. Registration at the University will then be completed. A strong programme is being arranged, which will be announced in due course. We invite all Baptist Bible Union members and all interested friends, Baptists especially, who can possibly come to Des Moines for these dates, to plan to do so. It will still be summertime, and people can easily drive four or five hundred miles by motor for the meetings. We are going to set up a great testimony for the Lord in Des Moines, and we ask that hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of people will endeavour to join us on these dates.

We appeal to all pastors to open their churches for the presentation of the programme of Des Moines University. Speakers will be provided wherever requested. Do not wait for the announcement of a definite programme, but begin at once. Let us put Des Moines University in such a position that it will challenge the attention of the whole Continent, that from its halls we may be able to send out qualified teachers for public and high schools and universities, who will stand squarely for the faith of Christ; and, above all, that we may be able to train ministers and missionaries and Christian workers who will be qualified to lead the hosts of Israel in the battle for the Book.

Campaign for Students.

The present Faculty, by which we mean, when all vacancies are filled, as they will be by the opening of the fall term at Des Moines; is capable of taking care of one thousand students. If this number were enrolled next fall, it would make the University self-supporting. We appeal to our friends, therefore, to do everything in their power to send students to Des Moines; first, for the advantage of the University itself; and, secondly, to assist us in carrying on the work financially. No university in its class in America will be found superior educationally to Des Moines, and it will have this distinctive advantage that in every department the Word of God will be honoured; and an endeavour will be made to lead the unconverted among the students to Christ, and to establish such as are His in the faith.

The calendar is just off the press, and will be sent to anyone on application. We suggest that pastors interview their high school students who have just graduated and who contemplate a college course, speak a good word of the University, and then send their names to Des Moines University, so that we may write them personally.

Information on all these matters will be supplied by the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, Miss Edith M. Rebman, Des Moines University, Des Moines, Iowa.

"THE CANADIAN BAPTIST" on "SPIRITS".

Last week we referred to *The Canadian Baptist* as a journal "which includes in its Editorial Staff someone who bears all the marks of being a near relative of one called Ananias". Apparently our Church Street contemporary does not like its name! We are sorry we are unable to be more complimentary, but truth compelled us. Were we to give that journal any

other name than Ananias, we should deserve to be called Ananias ourselves. This week in an article entitled "Spirits", we read as follows:

"We can imagine no difficult and trying situation in human relationships that can possibly exist that will not be made immeasurably easier and more adjustable if the parties to it will only maintain a generous and courteous spirit."

So writes a friend. He is right—absolutely right. Issues may be big in themselves and they may be difficult of settlement, but if there is a Christ-like spirit they are not impossible of solution. The instant, however, that one party begins to shout, "Ananias", or to employ the whole category of religious Billingsgate, the difficulties are increased enormously.

We agree that many differences can be composed when the parties to the dispute "maintain a generous and courteous spirit." In that belief we called the attention of the Senate of McMaster to the reports from England respecting the qualifications of Professor L. H. Marshall as a professor in that Institution. We made no charge: we "courteously" suggested the wisdom of the Senate's taking every precaution to avoid provoking further controversy—but the mere suggestion brought upon our head only a torrent of abuse.

But let us give a few examples of the fine "spirit" of those whose position *The Canadian Baptist* supports: At the Convention in Hamilton, Dr. Farmer said, referring to Professor Marshall, "As an honest man, and as a Baptist Christian man, I cannot turn down a man like that whose spirit is so fine." At the First Avenue Convention Professor Marshall, the man of "fine spirit", said,

"Speaking quite calmly and deliberately, and without any malice, I take all those suggestions which have been taken from *The Gospel Witness*, and I thrust them back again down Dr. Shields' throat, and I say to him: Thou liest!"

Another friend of *The Canadian Baptist*, Dr. A. J. Vining, Pastor of College Street Baptist Church, Toronto, at the First Avenue Convention, showed "a generous and courteous spirit" in the following words:

"I have more respect for a toad catching flies in the vapour of a dung-hill, than for some of you."

This may not be "religious Billingsgate": it is merely the approved McMaster style of address!

In the same article to which we have referred, *The Canadian Baptist* quotes with approval a few paragraphs in which these words occur: "Jesus was the greatest exponent of the generous spirit that the world has ever had". Of course every believer will agree with that, except that it does not go far enough. The Lord Jesus Christ is "the greatest" in every respect the world has ever known; but He was generous toward another attitude than that which *The Canadian Baptist* displays. Our Church Street contemporary, to be logical, would be generous toward the thief and the murderer, and the general disturber of the peace; but only bitter and vindictive toward the police and the soldiery who are in duty bound to keep order. *The Canadian Baptist* would be "generous" toward the incendiary who would set fire to a great building, and imperil the lives of multitudes; but would hail to prison and to death the faithful citizen who rings the fire alarm.

Our Lord, on the contrary, was so "generous" toward people who were being led astray by false religionists that He said, "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. . . . Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. . . . Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy

and iniquity. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous. . . . Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell."

The Gospel Witness has too much to do to give space to "exhuming festering bones and long dead issues", but when a "festering bone" is proudly exhibited by *The Canadian Baptist* as though it were a Field Marshall's baton, it becomes a duty to warn people to avoid its contagion. Our contemporary acknowledges there are "festering bones" about, and charges us, by implication, with exhuming them. We have not "exhumed" them: we have only exposed them, for they were never properly buried. But *The Canadian Baptist's* admission is an evidence that we are making real, if slow, progress; we may therefore hope that even our dull contemporary may yet learn what this meaneth, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF

Vol. II.

T. T. SHIELDS, Editor

No. 8

Lesson 7

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GENTILE APOSTASY.

LESSON TEXT: Romans, Chapter 1.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:16).

The lessons now take up the study of the Epistle to the Romans. The writer is Paul, the subject of the Epistle is the Gospel of God. There are four great divisions of the Epistle. First, the statement of the need of the Gospel, chapter 1 to 3:20. Second, the great gospel doctrines, chapter 3:21 to 8:39. Third, the relation of the Gospel to the fulfilment of the promises to the Jewish nation, chapters 9 to 11. Fourth, Gospel duties, chapters 12 to 16.

The first lesson deals with the need, the second and third lessons are also given to this subject. The first lesson describes the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. The truth that can be known of God is clearly shown to men. The omnipotence, the unchangeableness, the creatorship, the governorship, etc.; these and other things which can be known of God are revealed by direct revelation, through Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and others. Also by the works of creation which make abundantly clear the existence of the invisible things of God (vs. 19 and 20). Man is therefore left without excuse. The history of the degeneracy of man is described in the first chapter from the twenty-third verse to the close of the chapter.

They sought to lower God and exalt themselves. They refused to Him the glory due unto His name and did not recognize and thankfully acknowledge His goodness to them: "Because that, when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened" (v. 21). They became great thinkers and philosophers. They advanced theories of their own but rejected the things of God and became fools. Exactly the programme of Modernism to-day. Here is the inspired description of the downward stages. First: They changed the glory of the incorruptible God to an image made like unto corruptible (a) man, (b) birds, (c) quadrupeds, (d) creeping things. God honoured man by making him in His own image. Man dishonoured God by making an image of God in his likeness, and descending lower and lower until he worshipped his god in the image of reptiles and creeping things of the earth. Second: In the second stage of this downward history they changed the truth of God into a lie. They rejected the revelation of God and all testimonies of His righteousness and goodness. They put their own explanation and construction on every clear manifestation given to them.

Their wicked hearts controlled their thoughts; they denied the truth and believed their own lie. Third: In the third stage they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. The thought of God hindered them in the enjoyment of sin. They denied God and dismissed Him, that liberty might be had for unbridled desire.

These three distinct stages in degeneracy brought results that were fitting. The first led to the dishonouring of their own body, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves". Thus was the body, the lower part of man's nature, utterly degraded. He had dishonoured his God in his thoughts, changing Him in his thought to the image of himself and to the likeness of lower animals. He himself is given over to the control of that part of his being which has relation to the lower animals of creation.

The second stage of this downward history in which man changes the truth of God into a lie, and worships and serves the creature more than the Creator, brings also fitting recompense. The curse was first upon his body, now it is in his soul, the seat of his affections, which shares the degradation. "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections" (v. 26). What a descent from having the heart filled with the thought of God, engaging in His worship and performing His work, to the degradation described in verses 26 and 27.

The third stage of this downward course also produces its fitting consequence. As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, they are given over to a reprobate mind, that is, to a mind devoid of judgment. The highest part of their being, the spirit, is now on the side of evil; seemingly blind to any consequence, a hater of God, and given up entirely to wickedness.

Here is the complete degeneracy of man's threefold being,—body, soul and spirit, the total depravity of human nature. The chapter closes with two statements. First: The list of wicked things which have taken complete possession of the heart of man, and second: a statement of the insanity of the reprobate mind. The dreadful list in verses 29 to 31 contains two negative statements (1) without understanding, (2) without natural affection: and twenty-one positive statements of the fruits of departure from the living God. Here are three sevens, a three-fold fulness of depravity. It is a description of the apostasy of the nations of the earth of Paul's day, and every part of it can be found in the world of to-day.

There is also another list of the abominable things of darkness, very similar to this, given in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, which will characterize the condition of Christendom before Christ comes. Even then will the utter failure and depravity of man be apparent. The last statement of the chapter exhibits the insanity of sin. Men who know the judgment of God against this awful list of iniquities, who know these things to be worthy of death, commit the same, and actually find pleasure in other's doing the same damning things. Is not this utter, hopeless, depravity? Where does the evolutionist come in? Let us thank God that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound".

EDITORIAL NOTES.

To Correspondents.—The Editor begs his many unanswered correspondents not to think too hardly of him. Since some time in April he has travelled about 15,000 miles, has spoken three or four times each Sunday, has edited this paper weekly, and when not on the train, for some weeks past has been sitting at board or committee meetings all day. We are "going to" answer our correspondents some day, and we are "going to" prepare stronger meals for *Witness* readers in sermon and editorial pages when other duties become somewhat less exacting. Meanwhile, as we once heard Dr. Russel Conwell say of himself, we must be content to "feel ashamed of ourselves and go on."

To Jarvis St. Members.—The Pastor feels like confessing, "They made me keeper of the vineyards, and mine own vineyard have I not kept." We believe blessings abundant are in store for us as a church. The Pastor begs every member to stand by and try to make up for his deficiencies. He has not had a day's vacation since 1920, but is content to go on with the help of God and the most loyal church in the world.